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ABSTRACT

In this Web-based interdisciplinary lesson (involving social studies, geography, history, and language arts) students take a virtual field trip to the ruins of Pompeii to learn about everyday life in Roman times, then create a travelogue to attract visitors to the site and write an account of their field trip modeled on a description of Pompeii written by Mark Twain. Major learning objectives include: to learn about the history of Pompeii and its destruction; to gain insight into the past through archaeological interpretation; and to synthesize historical information through imaginative writing. The lesson plan (which may take 2-3 class periods) begins with a guiding question: "What can we learn about life in Roman times from the ruins of Pompeii?" Seven specific learning activities explore that question. They include material from numerous online resources and Web sites which students use to explore the lesson. Suggestions for extending the lesson are also included. The lesson plan: provides detailed information and ideas for teaching each lesson; cites learning objectives; gives appropriate grade levels and time required for each lesson; and outlines national standards for English language arts, social studies, and geography covered in the lesson. Contains extensive lists of Web sites and other resources. (SR)

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In Old Pompeii

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Introduction

In this lesson, students take a virtual field trip to the ruins of Pompeii to learn about everyday life in Roman times, then create a travelogue to attract visitors to the site and write an account of their field trip modeled on a description of Pompeii written by Mark Twain.

Learning Objectives

(1) To learn about the history of Pompeii and its destruction. (2) To gain insight into the past through archaeological interpretation. (3) To synthesize historical information through imaginative writing.

Lesson Plan

Guiding Question: What can we learn about life in Roman times from the ruins of Pompeii?

1 Begin the lesson by providing students with background on Pompeii (*pom-pay*), a small town in the Roman Empire that now offers us a unique window on life in those ancient times.

- Help students locate Pompeii in Italy on the eastern shore of the Bay of Naples, near the base of the volcano, Mt. Vesuvius. A map of this area is available through EDSITEment at the National Geographic Society Xpeditions website: click "Resources & Links" on the Xpeditions homepage, select "Map Machine at nationalgeographic.com," then click "Atlas Maps." Click "Select a New Map" and use the pop-up menu to select "Europe," then scroll down and click "Naples, Italy." Zoom in one level on this map for a view that includes Pompeii at the extreme right.
- Explain to students that Pompeii was destroyed during an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 C. E. that buried the city under more than six feet of ash and pumice. Although some people returned to try and recover items they had left behind, Pompeii was abandoned after this catastrophe, and over the centuries became largely forgotten. Finally, in the early 18th century, the discovery of some marble inscriptions by a farmer digging a well led to excavations which over the past 200 years have revealed a typical Roman city frozen in time.
- For more detailed information about the destruction and rediscovery of Pompeii, see the article on Pompeii from *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* available through EDSITEment at the Perseus Project website: type "Pompeii" into the search engine on the Perseus Project homepage, click "Search Perseus," then click the triangle beside the "Princeton Encyclopedia" entry and select the article on "Pompeii Italy."

SUBJECT AREAS

Literature: Biography
Literature: Essay
Foreign Language: Latin
Art: Architecture
Art: Anthropology
Art: Visual Arts
History: World: Europe

GRADE LEVELS

6-8
9-12

TIME REQUIRED

Two to three class periods

SKILLS

information gathering and research
map reading
chronological thinking
historical comprehension
historical analysis and interpretation
creative writing
collaboration
public speaking and presentation
Internet skills

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

National Council for the Social Studies

1. Culture (more)
2. Time, Continuity, and Change (more)
3. People, Places, and Environments (more)

National Geography Standards

3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on earth's surface. (more)
7. The physical processes

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2 To help students take a first step on their journey back in time to the days of Pompeii, have them read an eyewitness account of its destruction written by Pliny (*pli-nee*) the Younger (62-c. 114 C.E.). Translations of two letters in which Pliny describes what happened on that terrible day are available through EDSITEment at the Pompeii Forum Project website.

- Help students locate the places named in the letters: Misenum (*my-see-num*), now called Miseno, on the west shore of the Bay of Naples, across from Pompeii, and Stabiae (*sta-bee-eye*), now called Castellammare di Stabia, south of Pompeii on the bay.
- Focus discussion first on the events Pliny describes: the "cloud" of ash and pumice that marks the eruption of Vesuvius; the steady hail of ash and pumice that darkens the sky and mounds up to block the shore; the sheets of lightning crackling over the volcano (caused by dust particles charging the air with static electricity); tremors that knocked buildings off their foundations; fumes that combined with the dust to make breathing almost impossible; and an enveloping darkness that Pliny likens to "the black of closed and unlighted rooms." Point out in this discussion that Vesuvius did not encase Pompeii in molten lava; it buried the city under tons of ash in an eruption like that of Mount St. Helens in Washington state in 1980.
- Follow up this discussion of the event by having students comment on the glimpses of everyday Roman life we can find in Pliny's letters. Note, for example, how much time Pliny and his uncle devote to reading and study, and how they mark the day with meals and baths. Note also how they seem to spend much of their time outdoors. Point out the family's reliance on slaves -- to fetch shoes, carry messages, serve meals, lend physical support. Have students comment on the way Pliny characterizes the women in his story -- Rectina, who begs Pliny's uncle to save her, and his own mother, who begs Pliny to save himself. Contrast these portraits with Pliny's characterizations of his uncle and himself, who both exhibit an almost incredible stoicism in the face of danger. Finally, compare the behavior of Pliny and his uncle with that of the townspeople who surround them. What picture of Roman society emerges from these brief vignettes?

3 To help bring this ancient society to life, introduce students to the ruins of Pompeii with a video tour of the Forum Baths, available through EDSITEment at the Pompeii Forum Project website. This series of Quicktime videos, narrated by a member of the project team, explains the institution of the Roman bath and leads one through the different stages of the bathing process. Use the links on the floor plan of the Baths to move from the Entrance to the Apodyterium (*a-poe-die-tare-ee-um*) or dressing room, the Palaestra (*pal-eye-stra*) or exercise courtyard, the Calidarium (*cal-i-dar-ee-um*) or hot room, the Tepidarium (t*eh-pi-dar-ee-um*) or warm room, and the Frigidarium (*fri-geh-dar-ee-um*) or cold room. On this tour, students will begin to learn how archaeologists interpret architectural and design details to reconstruct the patterns of life that shaped Pompeiian society, and thus gain a foundation for their own explorations in the ancient city.

4 Divide the class into study groups for a virtual field trip to Pompeii, having each group explore a specific aspect of city life. Links are provided below for exploring the Forum area, the city's main shopping district, and a selection of Roman homes. Middle school teachers in particular may wish to provide students with a limited selection of these images, some of which come with explanations while others are simply captioned. You and your students can explore beyond this set of images by

that shape the patterns of earth's surface. (more)

12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement. (more)
17. How to apply geography to interpret the past. (more)

NCTE/IRA List of Standards for the English Language Arts

1. Students read a wide range of print and non print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world... (more)
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. (more)
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately... (more)
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. (more)
17. Students use a variety of technological and information resources... (more)

View your state's standards

visiting the websites from which they have been collected:

- Pompeii: a section of Professor Hugh Lester's Period and Style for Designers website at Tulane University, which is accessible through ArchNet. Click "Regional View" on the ArchNet homepage, then select "Europe;" scroll down to the "Italy" section of the resource list and click Pompeii. Provides an extensive collection of images, many with short explanations. (NOTE: This tour of Pompeii includes a visit to an ancient brothel which features an erotic wall painting, as well as an image of Priapus that is obscene by present standards.)
- The Pompeii Forum Project: includes an extensive archive of images of the Forum area, 360-degree virtual reality scenes from different parts of the city, images of selected sites, and a "walking" tour of Pompeii's streets.
- Pompeii and Herculaneum: Professor Cynthia Damon's website for Classics 36 at Amherst College is accessible through the Pompeii Forum Project. Click "Notes for Teachers and Students" on the Pompeii Forum Project homepage, then click "Eruption 79! An Eyewitness Speaks!" for a link to Professor Damon's site. Click "Syllabus" for a course outline that includes links to selected slides with brief captions. Click "Useful Resources" for a valuable set of links to other Pompeii websites.
- Perseus Project: includes a variety of Pompeii images with brief captions, which are accessible by typing "Pompeii" into the search engine on the Perseus Project homepage. Click the "Thumbnail" button on the search results page to view the image collection.

A detailed map of Pompeii, which labels most of the sites students will visit, is available through a link on Professor Damon's "Useful Resources" page. Scroll to the bottom and click No. 38, "an excellent set of photographs," which leads to the Pompeii section of John Hauser's Pictures of History Ð Roman Empire website at the University of California at Berkeley. Click the "Conjectural Map of Pompeii" link at the bottom of this page to view an indexed map at the Bellum Catilinae website.

The Forum

- Pompeii Map with Panoramic Images: click "Forum Map" and use the links to access 360-degree views of the Basilica (lower left), the Temple of Apollo (mid-left), the area between the Temple of Jupiter and the Macellum (top), and the Forum itself (center), along with other sites in this area.
- View of the Forum taken from overhead (http://pompeii.virginia.edu/local/pVII_7-9_bal_wj.jpg)
- View of the Forum (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii2.html)
- Entrance to the Forum (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii3.html)
- Colonnade in the Forum (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii4.html)
- Basilica (*ba-sill-i-ka*), the civic center and law court (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii5.html)
- Basilica image map, which allows one to move through the building (http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jjd5t/mike/photo2/basilica.html)

- Basilica detailed views (http://www.amherst.edu/~classics/class36/pompeii/basilica.html)
- Eumachia Building (*you-ma-kee-a*), headquarters of the fabric dyers guild (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii7.html)
- Eumachia Building image map, which allows one to move through the site (http://pompeii.virginia.edu/pompeii/eummap.html)
- Temple of Apollo, one of the most ancient religious sites in the city (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii8.html)
- Temple of Apollo, another view (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0111)
- The Macellum (*ma-sell-um*), the city's meat market (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0115)
- The Macellum, wall paintings within the building (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0116)
- The Macellum image map, which allows one to move through the site (http://pompeii.virginia.edu/pompeii/macmap.html)
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus image map, which allows one to move through this shrine to the emperor's "genius" or life spirit (http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jjd5t/mike/photo2/agustus.html)
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus, another view (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/pompeii/local/pVII_9_109-112sw1.jpg)
- Sanctuary of the Genius of Augustus, views of the altar (http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/pompeii/sgamap.html)

Shopping District

- Pompeii Map with Panoramic Images: click "Pompeii Map" and use the links on the map to access three 360-degree views along the Via dell'Abbondanza, Pompeii's main shopping district, which is the lower of the two main east-west streets shown on the map.
- Via dell'Abbondanza (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii14.html)
- Thermopolium (*thur-ma-poe-lee-um*), an ancient "fast food" or take-out restaurant (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii15.html)
- Thermopolium, another view (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0126)
- Thermopolium, another view showing a painted shrine to the *lares* (*lare-eez*) or guardian spirits of the place (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0127)
- Bakery (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii17.html)
- Bakery, another view showing the oven (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0122)
- Bakery, another view showing the millstones used to grind flour

(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0138)

- Fresco of a bread shop, showing a Pompeiian baker at work (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii18.html)
- Food Storage building (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii19.html)
- Laundry, where fabrics were cleaned, pressed, and dyed (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii20.html)
- Street Scenes: thermopolium, bakery, latrines and sewers, street signs, and the stepping stone crosswalks that let pedestrians avoid wading through the sewage that flowed through Pompeii's streets (http://www.amherst.edu/~classics/class36/pompeii/topography.html)
- More Street Scenes (http://www.amherst.edu/~classics/class36/pompeii/texture.html)

Homes

- Floor plan of the House of Panza, showing the typical organization of a well-to-do Roman home (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii33.html)
- Atrium (*ai-tree-um*) of the House of the Silver Wedding, named for its discovery in the year when Italy's King and Queen celebrated their silver wedding anniversary, showing the typical entry area of a Roman home (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii35.html)
- Impluvium (*im-plue-vee-um*) of the House of the Silver Wedding, showing the pool at the center of the atrium where rainwater was collected for the home (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii36.html)
- House of the Faun, named for a sculpture found in the impluvium
  Floorplan (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii39.html)
  Atrium, an artist's impression of what it may have looked like in ancient times (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii38.html)
  Impluvium, showing the famous sculpture (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii37.html)
  Impluvium, another view (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0145)
  Garden (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0147)
  Alexander Mosaic, showing Alexander the Great and Darius of Persia in battle; originally part of the floor in the House of the Faun (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii94.html)
  Alexander Mosaic, close-up of Alexander the Great (http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii94.html)

Alexander Mosaic, close-up of Darius
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii95.html)
More Images of the House of the Faun
(http://HTTP.CS.Berkeley.EDU/~jhauser/pictures/history/Rome/Pompeii/HouseOfTheFaun.html)
More Images of the House of the Faun
(http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jjd5t/region-vi/faun/faun-table1.html)

- Villa Oplontis
Portico and Garden
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii52.html)
Bedroom
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii53.html)
Dining Room
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii54.html)
Bath, a small private alternative to trips to the public baths
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii55.html)
- House of the Vettii (*vet-tee-ee*), named for the family of Vettius
Peristyle (*pare-i-stile*), an inner colonnaded garden courtyard
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii57.html)
Peristyle, another view showing wall paintings in the portico
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0141)
Oecus (*oh-kuss*), a small dining room
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii59.html)
Large Garden Room
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii60.html)
Large Garden Room wall decoration
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii61.html)
Ixion Room (*ik-sigh-on*), a highly decorated dining or reception room named for a painting on one of its walls
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii62.html)
Pentheus Room, another highly decorated dining room named for a painting on one of its walls
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii63.html)
Lararium (*la-rar-ee-um*), a shrine to the *lares* or guardian spirits of the house
(http://www.tulane.edu/lester/text/Western.Architect/Pompeii/Pompeii64.html)
Lararium, another view
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0143)
More Images of the House of the Vettii
(http://HTTP.CS.Berkeley.EDU/~jhauser/pictures/history/Rome/Pompeii/HouseOfTheVettii.html)
More Images of the House of the Vettii
(http://cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jjd5t/region-vi/vettii/vettii-table1.html)
Wall Paintings in the House of the Vettii
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0139)
More Wall Paintings
(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0140)
More Wall Paintings

(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/image?lookup=1999.04.0142)

5 Provide students with a set of questions to guide their explorations of Pompeii. Encourage them to look for resemblances between life in Pompeii and life in a modern-day city or town, using their imaginations to reach back across the centuries and fill in the picture of this vanished society. For example:

- Have students try to visualize the site as it appeared 2000 years ago. What is missing from the scene (e.g., doors, roofs, furniture, wall decorations, litter, animals, etc.)? What sorts of people do you imagine coming to the site? What do you see them doing? How do they interact? Encourage students to draw or describe the scenes they envision.
- Have students compare the site to a similar location in a modern-day city or town. What is our equivalent to this place? How do we behave there? When and why do we go there? What similarities help us understand Pompeiian society? What differences remind us that the ancient world is remote from the world of today?
- Have students make a list of the most interesting features they notice on their field trip. These can be details explained in the image captions (such as the stepping stones built into Pompeii's streets to allow pedestrians to avoid the sewage that flowed there) or details that simply catch a student's eye.
- Have each study group make a list of questions they would like to ask an expert on Pompeii. These can be used as the basis for research projects, but their immediate purpose should be to help students identify significant aspects of the city and begin to formulate ways to investigate further.

6 At the conclusion of their field trips, have each group give a brief report on the area of Pompeii it explored, explaining the site to class members who investigated other parts of the city. Students can use print outs of images for their presentations, or download images to create a computer slide show. Encourage students to imagine themselves travel agents as they prepare their reports, aiming to attract tourists to their part of the city. If time permits, students can also create brochures highlighting some of Pompeii's chief attractions.

7 Close the lesson by having students read Mark Twain's description of Pompeii from *Innocents Abroad,* which began as a series of letters describing his trip to Europe and the Middle East in 1867 and became the best-selling of all his books during his lifetime. "The Buried City of Pompeii" is Chapter 31 in *Innocents Abroad* and is available through EDSITEment at the Mark Twain in His Times website. Click "Innocents Abroad" on the website's homepage, then click "Browse etext" and select "Chapter 31."

- Compare Twain's impressions of the city with the students' own. How does he "make sense" of the archaeological record? What does he add to the scene with imagination? What "lessons" does he take away?
- Have students write their own account of Pompeii, or of a specific site in Pompeii, modeled on Twain's description of his visit. Students can write this account in letter form, imagining themselves telling a friend about what they have seen, or they can put the account in story form, following Twain's example by making themselves the story's main character.

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Extending the Lesson

- Provide students with a behind-the-scenes look at the work of archaeologists by visiting the "Three Trenches" section of the Pompeii Forum Project website. This is a three-part Quicktime video report on excavations that the project team carried out at Pompeii to learn more about how the Forum area of the city took shape. "Trench 1" presents evidence that a street was re-routed to make way for an extension of the Forum's Temple of Apollo in the decades before Pompeii was destroyed. "Trench 2" documents modifications to a house on the re-routed street that were contemporary with reconstruction of the Temple. "Trench 3" records a search for evidence of reconstruction on the Forum-side of the Temple, and reveals the kinds of surprises archaeologists often encounter in their work.
- The Pompeii Forum Project also provides an online activity for Latin students, "Read a Latin Inscription from Pompeii!," which guides students step-by-step through the process of deciphering and translating an inscription on the Eumachia Building.